

Remarks

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on January 30, 2003. Claims 1-4 have been editorially amended, and none of the amendments to the claims should be considered as limiting in any way. Claims 1-4 remain pending. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

In section 2 of the Office Action, claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Labedan et al., U.S. Patent No. 4,655,618. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is directed to a sealing device for a rolling contact bearing. Claim 1 recites two inserts made of metal material and which are each coupled to a relative race, as well as a phonic wheel which is supported by a more external of the two inserts. Claim 1 further recites that the more external of the two inserts comprises an annular housing for containing the phonic wheel which is axially open towards an outside of the bearing, and which presents a shield which is made of vulcanised rubber material and which is arranged in such a way as to completely seal the housing.

As noted at page 1, lines 21-23 of the present specification, a phonic wheel is a device incorporated into a bearing to measure the relative rotational speed of the two races of the bearing. It can be advantageous to configure a sealing device for a rolling contact bearing as recited by claim 1 for several reasons. For example, the shield of the sealing device can protect the phonic wheel from damage. The shield can also provide the phonic wheel with an enhanced level of magnetization to reduce errors associated with the wheel, and can also enable the wheel to contact the magnetizer without causing damage to the wheel or the magnetizer. In addition, the shield can be used with different sizes and types of phonic wheels, and the shield can be formed to eliminate any excess space surrounding the wheel. See generally page 7, line 12 - page 8, line 22 of the application.

Labedan discloses a needle bearing. The rejection states that Labedan disclosed a phonic wheel 16 supported by a more external insert 7. This characterization of Labedan is respectfully traversed.

Labedan discloses a triple seal including a reinforcement 16 formed by a tube 17, embedded in the material of the elastomer sleeve 12. See column 2, lines 16-20 of Labedan. The reinforcement 16 disclosed in Labedan is not a phonic wheel, in that Labedan fails to

disclose or suggest that the reinforcement 16 can be used to measure the relative rotational speed of the two races of the bearing. Labedan fails to disclose or suggest use of a phonic wheel at all.


For at least this reason, Labedan fails to anticipate claim 1, as well as claims 2-4 that depend therefrom. Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, claims 1-4 are now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration in the form of a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney with any questions regarding this application.

Respectfully submitted,
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